Thus the offtake is much less than the allocations.

(c) to (e). Recently, Government of Gujarat had requested vide letter dated 19.9.1996 for increase in allocation of wheat from 53500 MTs to 70000 MTs and rice from 29500 Mts to 35000 MTs every month and additional allotment of 20000 MTs of wheat for September. The State Government has again vide letter dated 16.11.96 requested for increase in allotment of wheat to 70000 tons of wheat. Such communications are considered in the monthly meetings of the Inter-Departmental Committee on allocation of PDS Commodities. The requests from Government of Gujarat were considered in the monthly meetings held on 18.10.96 and 19.11.96. The allotment for the month of December 1996 was increased to 60000 MTs of wheat and 35000 MTs of rice. The allotment of wheat for the month of January 1997 has been further increased from 60000 MTs to 65000 MTs.

Import of Edible Oil

571 SHRI BANWARI LAL PUROHIT : Will the Minister of CIVIL, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government have imported edible oil during 1995-96 and 1996-97;

(b) if so, the quantum of edible oil imported and the value thereof during the said period;

(c) whether the Government also propose to import edible oil during the remaining period of the current financial year; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF FOOD AND MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The quantity of edible oil imported by the Government for the Public Distribution System (PDS) during the financial years 1995-96 and 1996-97 and the CIF value thereof year wise, has been as under :

Year	Quantity (in lakh MT)	Value (Rs. in crores)
1995-96	2.02	445.56
1996-97*	1.49	295.50

*Upto 31.10.1996

(c) and (d). Presently the Government has not proposal to import edible oil during the remaining period of the current financial year in view of easy availability position of edible oils in the country.

[Translation]

More Rights to States

572 DR. RAMESH CHAND TOMAR
SHRI DEVI BUX SINGH
SHRI RADHA MOHAN SINGH

Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government propose to concede more rights to States especially to Jammu and Kashmir;

(b) if so, the details thereof together with the reasons therefor;

(c) whether the Government propose to concede more rights to other States also; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI MOHD. MAQBOOL DAR) : (a) and (d). The Government has already stated that it is in favour of maximum autonomy for the Sate of Jammu & Kashmir. However, it is not possible or feasible to indicate details in this regard at this stage.

The Government is in favour of devolution of powers and decentralisation of authority in political, administrative and economic spheres. At the second meeting of the inter-State Council held on 15th October, 1996, the Council recognised the need for comprehensive steps towards decentralisation of powers in the realm of Centre-State relations and endorsed the commitment in the Common Minimum Programme to reform Centre-State relations in the light of the recommendations of the Sarkaria Commission.

[English]

More Powers to States

573 SHRI ANNASAHID M.K. PATIL : Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Chief Ministers meeting recently held at Delhi discussed the major issue of transfer of more powers to the States, disbanding of Central sectors schemes and transfering funds thereunder to the States to formulate and implement schemes of area specific benefit within set priorities and grant of more autonomy to the States;

(b) if so, the details of agenda discussed and concensus arrived at;

(c) details of follow up action taken/proposed to be taken on the issues on which concensus was arrived at; and

(d) the details of progress made so far in delegation of more powers to the States?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI MOHD MAQBOOL DAR) : (a) to (d). The following was the agenda for the second meeting of the Inter-State Council held on 15.10.1996 :-

(1) Consideration of 179 recommendations of Sarkaria Commission on which there was a consensus in the Sub-committee of the Inter-State Council and adoption of resolutions;

(2) Methodology for examination of 44 recommendations of Sarkaria Commission on Centre-State Financial Relations, 11 recommendations on which there was no consensus in the Sub-committee and 1 recommendation relating to Centre-State relations in the sphere of education;

(3) Methodology for examination of the recommendations of Sarkaria Commission relating to Emergency Provisions including Article 356; and

(4) Appointment of High Level committee.

A copy of the recommendations adopted at the second meeting of the Inter-State Council is enclosed as Statement.

As decided by the Inter-State Council, the following steps have been taken;

(1) All the State Governments/Union Territories Administrations have been requested to send their comments/views on the 179 recommendations finalised by the Sub-Committee and also on any matter of relevance;

(2) Proposal for constituting a Standing Committee of the Inter-State Council is under consideration.

STATEMENT

Recommendations Adopted at the second meeting of the inter-State Council Held on 15.10.1996.

1. The Council welcomed the convening of the second meeting and congratulated the Prime Minister and the Home Minister for initiating the much delayed dialogue on the recommendations of the Sarkaria Commission on Centre-State relations. It recognised the need for comprehensive steps towards decentralisation in Centre-State relations and endorsed the commitment in Common Minimum Programme to reform Centre-State relations in the light of the recommendations of Sarkaria Commission.

2. The Council recommended that there should be a standing Committee of the Council for consultations and processing of matters for the consideration of the Council.

3. The Council took note of the work of the Sub committee in its meetings. 179 recommendations finalised by the Sub-committee were broadly endorsed and the Government was urged to initiate action to implement these recommendations as quickly as possible. At the same time, in view of the reservations expressed by some of the Chief Ministers, they are free to convey the same as well as any matter of relevance to the Inter-State Council Secretariat within one month so that their views can be further considered by the Standing Committee of the Council.

4. As envisaged in the notification constituting the Council meetings of the Council will be convened three times a year as notified earlier. The Standing Committee of the Council may meet as often as necessary.

5. The Standing Committee will process all matters pertaining to Centre-State relations before they are taken up for consideration in the Inter-State Council. It will provide continuity of discussions and also undertake monitoring of the implementation of decisions taken on the recommendations of the Council.

6. Based upon past experience and judicial pronouncements, continuance/amendment of Article 356 requires to be further examined so as to prevent its misuse.

7. Having regard to the current fiscal situation in the country in the Centre and in the States and with regard to national economic policies the structure of Centre-State financial relationship needs to be examined afresh and up-dated with a view to promoting decentralisation.

8. The council recommended that the Standing Committee would review and update the recommendations of the Sarkaria Commission especially the vital question of devolution of financial powers from the Central Government to State Governments and the examination of changes required in Article 356 of the Constitution. The Committee will be required to give its report within three months and the same will be considered immediately thereafter by the Council.

9. Observations and proposals made by the Members of the Council at this meeting, would also be referred to the Standing Committee for their consideration and report to the Council.

10. The Standing Committee may, if necessary, invite experts and persons eminent in specific fields to have the benefit of their views while deliberating upon the related subjects.

11 After the 73rd and 74th constitution Amendment Acts, decentralization of resources, powers and responsibilities to Urban and Rural Panchayat Raj institutions have become very important. The Council recommends adequate devolution in this respect from the States to Local bodies.

12. Regional Development boards and other regional development arrangements within the State require to be fully strengthened wherever necessary and made operational with full delegation of financial and executive powers. The State Governments would be fully involved in making these arrangements and in the exercise of powers under Article 371 of the Constitution.

[Translation]

Sale of Cow-Products

574. SHRI DADA BABURAO PARANJPE : Will the Minister of ANIMAL HUSBANDRY AND DAIRYING be pleased to state :

(a) whether despite a complete ban on cow slaughter in Madhya Pradesh, cow-products such as toffees, chewing-gum, futtella and metas are available openly in markets, and

(b) the preventive steps proposed to be taken by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF ANIMAL HUSBANDRY AND DAIRYING IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI RAGHUVANSH PRASAD SINGH) : (a) and (b) The information is being collected and will be laid on the table of the House.

Review of Capital Punishment

575. KUMARI UMA BHARATI :
SHRI SATYA DEO SINGH :
DR RAMKRISHNA KUSMARIA :

Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government propose to constitute any Commission for reviewing the capital punishment, and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI MOHD. MAQBOOL DAR) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

[English]

Prices of Essential Commodities

576. SHRI K.H. MUNIYAPPA : Will the Minister of CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state :

(a) whether the prices of basic commodities like cereals, pulses, sugar, fruits, vegetables, edible oils, milk, etc. have highly increased during the past six months;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the reasons for the hike in prices of basic commodities; and

(d) the steps taken by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF FOOD AND MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV) : (a) and (b) Variations in the Wholesale Price Index of some of the basic commodities during the last six months ending October 1996 are given below.

Commodity	Variation (per cent)
Cereals	11.1
Pulses	0.5
Vegetables	21.8
Fruits	-6.5
Sugar	0.8
Milk	2.0
Edible Oils	3.3

(c) The reasons for the increase in the prices of some of the essential commodities can be attributed to the hike in the prices of petroleum products, gap between demand and supply and seasonal factors.

(d) Government has accorded the highest priority to the control of prices of essential commodities. Apart from certain long term measures to increase the production of essential goods, imports under Open General Licence (OGL) of items which are in short supply like edible oils and pulses are encouraged to augment the total availability of these items. Some of the commodities are also supplied through the Public Distribution System and Cooperative Stores at below market prices. Stringent actions are being taken against hoarders and black marketeers and other indulging in unfair trade practices under the Essential Commodities Act and Prevention of Black Marketing and Maintenance of supplies of Essential Commodities Act etc. by the State/UT Governments.